



**Virginia Social  
Services System  
Planning Glossary**

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## 1. Introduction

The object of this planning glossary is to help ensure consistence across the organization when discussing and working with strategic planning issues. It is a foundation on which the organization can build not only strategic planning best practices but potentially all planning activities.

## 2. Glossary

**Annual Planning Calendar:** The Annual Planning Calendar describes the major steps within the planning cycle and acts as a guide for the organization, identifying when items are required to be delivered within that cycle.

**Customers:** These are persons, groups or organizations directly impacted by the key activities (products and/or services) you are providing. They may be able to be grouped as internal or external.

*Example:*

*Internal: Localities, State Employees, Partners.*

*External: Service Recipients, Non-Profit Organizations, Service Recipients Contractors.*

**Goal:** Broad general statements of the long-term results needed to achieve the mission and vision. A goal is marked by very general, relatively ambiguous language, such as "to strengthen," "to serve," "to improve," "to become," "to heighten," "to maintain," "to exceed," etc. A goal is made clearer, less ambiguous by means of two or more objectives associated with it.

*Example:*

- *To provide world class customer service*
- *Increase operational efficiency*
- *Strengthen neighborhoods*
- *To be the employer of choice*

**Key Activities:  
(Products & Services)**

Key Activities or Products and Services are the deliverables that the customer receives.

*Example: Paychecks, Catalogs, Information, Fresh Produce.*

**Mission Statement:**

Statement of purpose, fundamental reason for an organization's existence. The statement should be broad enough to provide organization-wide strategic direction, yet specific enough to communicate the reason for the organization's existence to those not familiar with its work.

*Example:*

- *Explore strange new worlds, seek out new life and new civilizations and boldly go where no man has ever gone before*
- *We put out fires, we save lives, we stay safe*
- *Provide continuous learning that promotes individual and organizational success*

**Objective:**

Description of the results that when achieved, moves your organization towards its stated goals.

**Outcome Measure:**

An assessment of the results of a program, project or work task compared to its intended purpose to produce a specific desired effect or result which can be qualitatively measured.

**Performance Measure:**

A generic term used to describe a particular quantitative indicator designated to measure either input, output, outcome, efficiency, or effectiveness. Performance Measures are composed of a number and a unit of measure. The number provides the magnitude (how much) and the unit is what gives the number its meaning (what). Performance Measure or Performance Metric.

**Stakeholder:**

Those individuals, groups, and parties that either affect or who are affected by the organization. Stakeholders as a general rule, include all internal and external customers. Stakeholders are involved or consulted as a part of the strategic planning process so that their views, needs and concerns are given consideration during development of organizational goals, objectives and strategies, and also to provide input related to programmatic outcome measures.

**Strategies:**

Action items that support the accomplishment of the strategic plan and deliver the results needed to accomplish goals and objectives. They are executed in a tactical manner so as to link Goals and Objectives to day-to-day operations.

*Example:*

- *Develop organizational competencies*
- *Work with non-profits to construct affordable housing alternatives*
- *Implement performance based contracting*
- *Implement a “university” learning structure*

**Strategic Plan:**

The strategic plan is a statement or affirmation of your organization’s intention for the next period of time specified, the basis for monitoring its progress and determining results.

**Strategic Planning:**

The systematic clarification and documentation of what an organization wishes to achieve and how to achieve it. The objective of strategic planning is a set of goals, action steps and measurements constructed to guide performance. It’s a process not a document.

**SWOT Analysis:**

An organizational assessment to develop a clear sense of:

**Strengths:** Internal resources or capabilities

**Weaknesses:** Internal deficiencies in resources or capabilities

**Opportunities:** External factors or situations that can favorably impact the organization

**Threats:** External factors or situations that can negatively impact the organization

**Values:**

The principles that govern behavior and the way in which the organization and its members conduct business.

*Example: Accountability, Integrity, Effectiveness.*

**Vision:**

Identifies where the organization intends to be in the future or where it should be to best meet the needs of stakeholders. Incorporates a shared understanding of the nature and purpose of the organization and uses this understanding to move the organization toward a greater purpose.

## **Document Information**

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### Document Revisions:

<b>Version No.</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Date</b>
1	First publication.	4/20/03
2	Update to owner information	2/26/04
3	Updated with bookmarks, hyperlinks	6/24/04